

THE GENIUS WITHIN YOU!

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There may be no greater sports story than the one that comes out of Santa Clara, California. There are some tremendous swimmers in Santa Clara on a swim team. Just a bunch of average kids, all born and reared in the California area. There's nothing very special about their background. There are 15 members on the Santa Clara swim team. At the time, they're average was 16. A friend on the speaking circuit, Coach John Wooden, was telling me their story. He said he had a chance to speak at their awards banquet several years back and he couldn't believe his ears.

Wooden tells the story of sitting at the head table of their banquet next to their coach, George Haynes. Wooden asked Haynes, "George, what's the secret of this fantastic team of yours?" You see Wooden couldn't believe his eyes either. The average girl was 5 1/4" tall and weighed 115 pounds. The greatest swimmer in the world at the time (and probably in history) was there -- Mark Spitz. He weighed only 150 pounds and stood 5'-10". There he sat -- this tiny guy, who held about 8 world records. Wooden asked, "What's their secret, George?" These kids weren't imported from all over the country -- they were from Santa Clara or the surrounding areas.

Coach Haynes simply replied to Wooden, "come out tomorrow and watch the workouts. You'll get your answer."

The next day Wooden was there as the swim team got ready to work out. He couldn't believe his eyes. He thought they might come out complaining or acting sluggish. Not so. They burst through the locker room doors with an enthusiasm that would make any coach proud. Never a complaint. Never a negative thought. Nothing but positive vibes! Even the tiny 5 year old kids came dashing from the locker room.

Would you believe he's got those five year old kids believing what they're going to break world's records when they grow up? And get this; the record hasn't even been set yet! But they've done it before and they'll do it again. There is genius in the average person.

What's the capacity of a five year old kid? Coach Wooden told me there were 35 world's records on the walls of Coach Haynes' office, but Haynes apologized for some errors. You see, three of the world's records were out of date. "We can't make the plaques fast enough," said Haynes. Can you imagine having a swim team that breaks world records faster than you can make plaques? That's motivation. That's belief in one's self. That's a little genius in the common man! Just a bunch of average kids with a dream and a coach driving them to further excellence, running up and down the sidelines, " you can do three seconds better, put all you've got."

You'd think those kids would hate that guy's guts, wouldn't you? They don't. Coach Wooden told me he stood next to that coach after he gave a speech and with tears streaming down their faces they thanked him from the bottom of their hearts for what he had done for them.

Challenge Genius

We have a wrong psychology about kids today. We thin if we give them everything they'll love us. Not so. Young people only love their parents when their parents challenge them, when they challenge the genius we have within each of us. A kid without a dream is a kid without a purpose, without challenge, without hope, without anything. And he'll turn to hat.

Everyone wants to be motivated. Everyone wants to hope for something. That's when you discover your capacity. You may or may not remember Johnny Weissmuller, the great "Tarzan-of-the-Apes." He had set about 53 American records, 17 world's records and God knows how many gold medals in the Olympics. One sports writer called Weissmuller a super phenomena. "No one will ever beat Johnny Weissmuller."

Here he was, 6'-1", the perfect leverage -- 190 pounds. "Tarzan-of-the-Apes." Just to give you an idea of the capacity of people -- who would you guess is breaking Johnny Weissmuller's World Records today? Thirteen year old girls! If you ever said to Johnny Weissmuller that a 13 year old girl would break his record, every ape in the jungle would get you!

What is the capacity of a 13 year old girl? Before you answer that, tell me how many muscles there are in the body, then tell me how many atoms there are in a muscle, then tell me the power of an atom! The truth is, we don't know the capacity of a person -- not even physically. There is unbelievable power in a person.

Brutus Hamilton, a great track coach from California, once wrote a "Blue Book" and in the "Blue Book" he stated -- "these are the maximums. No one will exceed these records. This is how high a man can jump. This is how fast he can run. This is how far he can throw. This is how strong he can be." Hardly a year went by before every single maximum, which Hamilton said would not be met, were broken.

In the sports world, records fall. In the business world, records collapse. In the scientific world, cures are common place. Why? Because people discover new capacity. That's why records fall, that's why a would-be-entrepreneur like Henry Ford built a conglomerate and that's why Dr Jonas Salk invented the vaccine that would affect the lives of millions.

Someone asked me recently, "how many records will fall in the 1980 Olympics?" My answer -- all of them! Maybe every single one won't fall, but I'll guarantee that better than 90 percent will. Why? Because every record set is a new horizon. The capacity of the human being is coming out.

We don't know what our capacity is. One of the reasons is we're conditioned by other things to believe the human being isn't very much. We're so behavioristic in our concepts that we can't even visualize the capacity of a human person. But the sports world and life illustrates what can happen when a person is motivated.

You only discover your capacity when you're reaching for an enormous goal. You only use what capacity you do have when you're challenged. Please pardon the personal reference and please understand that I don't say this to be humble. When I won the World Championship of Public Speaking in 1978 in Vancouver, British Columbia, I suppose there were at least 20,000 speakers in the 65,000 member Toastmasters Organization who were far better speakers than I was. Much better educated, much more experienced, much better talented than I dreamed of being. The difference between the others and me was simple -- I believed I could win that World Championship and they didn't. That's why 90 percent of them never even won a club contest, let alone the district, regional, area, national and others. You've got to believe you can succeed if you expect to succeed.

Your capacity is discovered in challenge and the bigger the challenge, the bigger you become as a person. If you set a little, tiny goal with no challenge, you'll never make it.

When Muhammad Ali used to brag "I am the greatest," most of us were hoping somebody would cram it down his throat. I disagree politically with Ali on many issues but I'll give him this. He'd always say -- "I'm the greatest." What he was really saying was "God gave me two of the fastest hands he ever gave any man, the best lungs, the best legs. He's given me the best personality He could give anybody."

Do you know how important it is to feel that way about yourself, to feel that you've got it? Most of us say I'm the worst, I can't do anything. I'm terrible. We wonder why we don't do anything and the problem is we don't believe we can. Can you imagine Ali going into a boxing ring thinking, "maybe I'm not the greatest."

Like Joe Namath, Ali believed he could do it. Many people hated Joe Namath. But how would you like to go into a huddle and the quarterback comes trembling and saying, "gee, fellas, we're really gonna get stomped today." You can't think that way. You've got to think you can be as great as your challenge. Then you will succeed -- not in spite of yourself, but rather because of yourself.

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